

C378
49/1a

LAMBDA

Carolina Gay And Lesbian Association Newsletter[©]

Volume 11, Number 4

April 1985

Pornography: Obscenity or Entertainment?

Pornography, judging from the recent issue of The Front Page which featured a number of articles and opinions on the subject, threatens to become one of those unfortunate issues that serve to divide the lesbian and gay male communities which otherwise have so much in common in their struggles for justice, freedom, and social acceptance. I realize that the possible role of certain forms of pornography in inciting violence upon women might well lead to some legal limitations on "artistic license" and (more seriously) constitutional rights of free expression. It is not my intention to address this explosive issue directly but rather to make a small contribution to a less heated discussion of the problem by exploring the appeal (and limitations) of erotic pornography as seen by a gay male.

A U.S. Supreme Court justice once admitted his inability to define pornography and yet asserted confidently, "I know it when I see it." Just what constitutes appealing (as opposed to offensive) pornography seems to be a very subjective matter too.

If one considers pornography to be a representation of sexual acts, then the acts themselves, the actors, the setting and the medium are all crucial to whether the material at hand seems arousing, repulsive, or simply uninteresting. For

the moment, we need not concern ourselves with the substantial body of public opinion which is adamantly opposed to the portrayal of sexual acts of any sort. For those who are not opposed on principle, the portrayal of sexual acts which the observer would not like to imitate can stimulate only curiosity, if that.

At this point, heterosexuals and homosexuals part company. The perceived desirability of the actor(s) is usually only slightly less important a consideration than the acts themselves. Here, individual preferences for physical types become important. Even if these choices happen to be appealing, a setting, badly chosen, or simply not to the tastes of the beholder, can easily ruin everything. Attractive partners engaged in acts congenial to the observer can still produce a reaction of repulsion if the observer finds, say the props of sadomasochism or a theme of violence repugnant. Here often is found the point where the respective gay communities split company on their reactions to some erotic pornography, the point where indifference can harden to enraged repulsion. To complete the picture, so to speak, is the medium. A ridiculously written or badly photographed article of erotica badly undermines the elements of pictorial realism, plausibility, or (alternately) (see PORNOGRAPHY on page 6)

CGLA History — Part III

Reflections on Three Years in CGLA

With graduation almost upon me, and the "real world" looming ahead, I find myself looking back on my college years. A good portion of those years, three in fact, were spent involved with the Carolina Gay Association. Summer 1982 -- I was just coming out and knew no one. How do I meet other gay people? I saw in the Daily Tar Heel an announcement for a CGA potluck dinner. So, I went to the Castle for the potluck, met a bunch of people, ate some good food, and got involved with CGA. Later that summer, CGA and Stephen's... After All (a now defunct restaurant and night club in Village Plaza) began co-sponsoring a Monday night get-together that was loads of fun and very popular. Folks would visit, chat, seat, drink, and

get entertained by some great acts, such as the comedy team Herb and Potatoe, trumpeter Michael Murphey, vocalists Constance Prince, and House singer Carole Sloane.

Fall 1982 -- Things got off to a slow start that semester. CGA seemed in a state of transition. Most of the older, active members were gone, and I was one of the few new members who seemed very enthusiastic. Because of my enthusiasm, and also my naivety, I got talked into become treasurer for the group, taking Randy's place. So, Kevin was chair, and I was treasurer, and CGA remained pretty much invisible on campus. Daily trashing sessions went on in the office, while Sapphire, Cassiopeia, Ouida Mae, and Annie (see CGLA HISTORY on page 5)